# Favorite Short Poems

TOM MOORE.

A Treasury of

# Favorite Short Poems

Selected, edited, and annotated by

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A TREASURY OF
FAVORITE SHORT POEMS
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To

C. A. L.

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# Favorite Short Poems

## EDMUND SPENSER
(1552?–1599)

### THE SWAN

Upon that famous river's farther shore
  There stood a snowy Swan, of heavenly hue
And gentle kind, as ever fowl afore;
  A fairer one in all the goodly crew
Of white Strymonian* brood might no man view;
There he most sweetly sang the prophecy
Of his own death in doleful elegy.

At last, when all his mourning melody
  He ended had, that both the shores resounded,
Feeling the fit that him forewarned to die,
  With lofty flight above the earth he bounded,
  And out of sight to highest heaven mounted.

Where now he is become an heavenly sign.
There now the joy is his; here sorrow mine.

* The Strymon is a river in Thrace that empties into a gulf with the same name. A mythical king, Strymon, a son of Oceanus and Tethys, ruled Thrace. He died by drowning in the river. Strymon was deified and thought of as a river god.

## THOMAS NASHE
(1567–1601)

### SPRING, THE SWEET SPRING

Spring, the sweet spring, is the year's pleasant king,
Then blooms each thing, then maids dance in a ring,
Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds do sing:
  Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!*

The palm and may make country houses gay,
Lambs frisk and play, the shepherds pipe all day,
And we hear aye birds tune this merry lay:
  Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!

The fields breathe sweet, the daisies kiss our feet,
Young lovers meet, old wives a-sunning sit,
In every street these tunes our ears do greet:

Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!
Spring, the sweet spring!

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* These are the calls of the cuckoo, nightingale, lapwing, and owl.

## JOHN DONNE
(1573–1631)

### STAY, O SWEET

Stay, O sweet, and do not rise!
The light that shines comes from thine eyes;
The day breaks not: it is my heart,
Because that you and I must part.
Stay! or else my joys will die,
And perish in their infancy.

'Tis true, 'tis day: what though it be?
O, wilt thou therefore rise from me?
Why should we rise because 'tis light?
Did we lie down because 'twas night?
Love, which in spite of darkness brought us hither,
Should in despite of light keep us together.

Light hath no tongue, but is all eye.
If it could speak as well as spy,
This were the worst that it could say:—
That, being well, I fain would stay,
And that I lov'd my heart and honor so,

That I would not from him, that had them, go.

Must business thee from hence remove?
Oh, that's the worse disease of love!
The poor, the fool, the false, love can
Admit, but not the busied man.
He, which hath business, and makes love, doth do
Such wrong, as when a married man doth woo.

## RICHARD BARNFIELD
(1574–1627)

### ADDRESS TO THE NIGHTINGALE

As it fell upon a day
In the merry month of May,
Sitting in a pleasant shade
Which a grove of myrtles made,
Beasts did leap and birds did sing,
Trees did grow and plants did spring;
Every thing did banish moan
Save the Nightingale alone.
She, poor bird, as all forlorn,
Lean'd her breast up-till a thorn,
And there sung the dolefull'st ditty
That to hear it was great pity.
Fie, fie, fie, now would she cry;
Tereu, tereu, by and by:
That to hear her so complain
Scarce I could from tears refrain;
For her griefs so lively shown
Made me think upon mine own.
—Ah, thought I, thou mourn'st in vain,

None takes pity on thy pain:
Senseless trees, they cannot hear thee,
Ruthless beasts, they will not cheer thee;
King Pandion,* he is dead,
All thy friends are lapp'd in lead:
All thy fellow birds do sing
Careless of thy sorrowing:
Even so, poor bird, like thee
None alive will pity me.

* Pandion was King of Athens; and during his reign, it is said that Dionysus and Demeter brought a great bounty to Attica.

## RICHARD CRASHAW
(1613?–1649)

### THE WEEPER. MARY MAGDALENE

The dew no more shall weep
  The primrose's pale cheek to deck:
The dew no more shall sleep
  Nuzzled in the lily's neck:
Much rather would it tremble here
And leave them both to be thy tear.

Not the soft gold which
  Steals from the amber-weeping tree,
Makes Sorrow half so rich,
  As the drops distill'd from thee:
Sorrow's best jewels be in these
Caskets, of which Heaven keeps the keys.

When Sorrow would be seen
  In her brightest majesty,
  —For she is a queen—
  Then is she dresst by none but thee;
Then, and only then, she wears

Her richest pearls—I mean thy tears.

Not in the evening's eyes
  When they red with weeping are
For the sun that dies,
  Sits Sorrow with a face so fair:
No where but here doth meet,
Sweetness so sad, sadness so sweet.

When some new bright quest
  Takes up among the stars a room,
And Heaven will make a feast,
  Angels with their bottles come,
And draw from these full eyes of thine
Their Master's water, their own wine.

Does the night arise?
  Still thy tears do fall and fall.
Does night lose her eyes?
  Still the fountain weeps for all.
Let night or day do what they will,
Thou hast thy task, thou weepest still.

## JOHN DRYDEN
(1631–1700)

### THE SWALLOW

The swallow, privileged above the rest
Of all the birds as man's familiar guest,
Pursues the sun in summer, brisk and bold,
But wisely shuns the persecuting cold;
Is well to chancels and to chimneys known,
Though 'tis not thought she feeds on smoke alone.
From hence she has been held of heavenly line,
Endued with particles of soul divine:
This merry chorister had long possess'd
Her summer seat, and feather'd well her nest,
Till frowning skies began to change their cheer,
And time turn'd up the wrong side of the year;
The shedding trees began the ground to strow*
With yellow leaves, and bitter blasts to blow:
Such auguries of winter thence she drew,
Which by instinct or prophecy she knew;
When prudence warn'd her to remove betimes,
And seek a better heaven and warmer climes.
Her sons were summon'd on a steeple's height,

And, call'd in common council, vote a flight.
The day was nam'd, the next that should be fair;
All to the general rendezvous repair;
They try their fluttering wings, and trust themselves in air.
Who but the swallow now triumphs alone?
The canopy of heaven is all her own:
Her youthful offspring to their haunts repair,
And glide along in glades, and skim in air,
And dip for insects in the purling springs,
And stoop on rivers to refresh their wings.

* Strow is an archaic word for 'strew,' to scatter.

## BASHO (MATSUO KINSAKU)
(1644–1694)

### EIGHT HAIKUS OR EPIGRAMS

You make the fire
And I'll show you something wonderful:
A big ball of snow!

A cicada shell;
It sang itself
Utterly away.

All the day long—
Yet not long enough for the skylark,
Singing, singing.

Awake! awake!
I'll make of thee
My comrade, sleeping butterfly.

A strange flower
For birds and butterflies
The autumn sky.

A weathered skeleton
In windy fields of memory,
Piercing like a knife.

Sick on my journey,
Only my dreams will wander
These desolate moors.

Tremble, oh my gravemound,
In time my cries will be
Only this autumn wind.

## THOMAS D'URFEY
(1653–1723)

### CHLOE DIVINE

Chloe's a Nymph in flowery groves,
  A Nereid in the streams;
Saint-like she in the temple moves,
  A woman in my dreams.

Love steals artillery from her eyes,
  The Graces point her charms;
Orpheus is rivall'd in her voice,
  And Venus in her arms.

Never so happily in one
  Did heaven and earth combine:
And yet 'tis flesh and blood alone
  That makes her so divine.

## JOHN LORD CUTTS
(1661–1707)

### SONG

Only tell her that I love:
Leave the rest to her and Fate:
Some kind planet from above
May perhaps her pity move:
Lovers on their stars must wait.—
Only tell her that I love!

Why, O why should I despair!
Mercy's pictured in her eye:
If she once vouchsafe to hear,
Welcome Hope and farewell Fear!
She's too good to let me die.—
Why, O why should I despair?

## WILLIAM COWPER
(1731–1800)

### TO A YOUNG LADY

Sweet stream, that winds through yonder glade,
Apt emblem of a virtuous maid—
Silent and chaste she steals along,
Far from the world's gay busy throng:
With gentle yet prevailing force,
Intent upon her destined course;
Graceful and useful all she does,
Blessing and blest where'er she goes;
Pure-bosom'd as that watery glass,
And Heaven reflected in her face.

## WILLIAM BLAKE
(1757–1827)

### THE BLOSSOM

Merry, merry sparrow!
Under leaves so green
A happy blossom
Sees you, swift as arrow,
Seek your cradle narrow,
Near my bosom.
Pretty, pretty robin!
Under leaves so green
A happy blossom
Hears you sobbing, sobbing,
Pretty, pretty robin,
Near my bosom.

### THE LAMB

Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee,
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;

Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
  Little lamb, who made thee?
  Dost thou know who made thee?

  Little lamb, I'll tell thee;
  Little lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is called by thy name,
For He calls Himself a Lamb.
He is meek, and He is mild,
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are called by his name.
  Little lamb, God bless thee!
  Little lamb, God bless thee!

## ROBERT BURNS
(1759–1796)

### O WERE MY LOVE YON LILAC FAIR

O were my Love yon lilac fair,
  Wi' purple blossoms to the spring,
And I a bird to shelter there,
  When wearied on my little wing;
How I wad mourn when it was torn
  By autumn wild and winter rude!
But I wad sing on wanton wing
  When youthfu' May its bloom renew'd.

O gin my Love were yon red rose
  That grows upon the castle wa',
And I mysel a drap o' dew,
  Into her bonnie breast to fa';
O there, beyond expression blest,
  I'd feast on beauty a' the night;

Seal'd on her silk-saft faulds to rest,
Till fley'd awa' by Phoebus' light.*

* Phoebus is a byname for Apollo, hence the sun personified.

## JAMES MONTGOMERY
(1771–1854)

### HANNAH

At fond sixteen my roving heart
Was pierced by Love's delightful dart:
Keen transport throbb'd through every vein,
—I never felt so sweet a pain!

Where circling woods embower'd the glade,
I met the dear romantic maid;
I stole her hand—it shrunk—but no;
I would not let my captive go.

With all the fervency of youth,
While passion told the tale of truth,
I mark'd my Hannah's downcast eye,
'Twas kind, but beautifully shy.

Not with a warmer, purer ray,
The sun, enamor'd, woos young May;
Nor May, with softer maiden grace,
Turns from the Sun her blushing face.

But, swifter than the frighted dove,
Fled the gay morning of my love;
Ah! that so bright a morn, so soon,
Should vanish in so dark a noon.

The angel of Affliction rose,
And in his grasp a thousand woes;
He pour'd his vial on my head,
And all the heaven of rapture fled.

Yet, in the glory of my pride,
I stood—and all his wrath defied;
I stood—though whirlwinds shook my brain,
And lightnings cleft my soul in twain.

I shunn'd my nymph;—and knew not why
I durst not meet her gentle eye;
I shunn'd her for—I could not bear
To marry her to my despair.

Yet, sick at heart with hope delay'd,
Oft the dear image of that maid
Glanced, like the rainbow, o'er my mind,
And promised happiness behind.

The storm blew o'er, and in my breast
The halcyon Peace rebuilt her nest;
The storm blew o'er, and clear and mild
The sea of Youth and Pleasure smiled.

'Twas on the merry morn of May,
To Hannah's cot I took my way:
My eager hopes were on the wing,
Like swallows sporting in the Spring.

Then as I climb'd the mountains o'er,
I lived my wooing days once more;
And fancy sketch'd my married lot,
My wife, my children, and my cot.

I saw the village steeple rise—
My soul sprang, sparkling, in my eyes:
The rural bells rang sweet and clear—
My fond heart listen'd in mine ear.

I reach'd the hamlet—all was gay;
I love a rustic holiday:
I met a wedding—stepp'd aside;
It pass'd—my Hannah was the bride!

—There is a grief that cannot feel;
It leaves a wound that will not heal;
—My heart grew cold it felt not then—
When shall it cease to feel again?

## THOMAS MOORE
(1779–1852)

### COME O'ER THE SEA

Come o'er the sea,
Maiden, with me,
Mine through sunshine, storm, and snows;
Seasons may roll,
But the true soul
Burns the same, where'er it goes.
Let fate frown on, so we love and part not;
'Tis life where thou art, 'tis death where thou art not.
Then, come o'er the sea,
Maiden, with me,
Come wherever the wild wind blows;
Seasons may roll,
But the true soul
Burns the same, where'er it goes.

Was not the sea
Made for the Free,
Land for courts and chains alone?
Here we are slaves,

But, on the waves,
Love and Liberty's all our own.
No eye to watch, and no tongue to wound us,
All earth forgot, and all heaven around us—
Then, come o'er the sea,
Maiden, with me,
Mine through sunshine, storm, and snows;
Seasons may roll,
But the true soul
Burns the same, where'er it goes.

## WHILE GAZING ON THE MOON'S LIGHT

While gazing on the moon's light,
A moment from her smile I turn'd,
To look at orbs that, more bright,
In lone and distant glory burn'd.
But, too far
Each proud star,
For me to feel its warming flame—
Much more dear
That mild sphere,
Which near our planet smiling came;
Thus, Mary, be but thou my own—
While brighter eyes unheeded play,
I'll love those moonlight looks alone,
Which bless my home and guide my way!

The day had sunk in dim showers,

But midnight now, with luster meek,
Illumined all the pale flowers,
Like hope that lights a mourner's cheek.
I said (while
The moon's smile
Play'd o'er a stream in dimpling bliss),
"The moon looks
On many brooks,
The brook can see no moon but this:"
And thus I thought our fortunes run,
For many a lover looks to thee,
While, oh! I feel there is but one.
One Mary in the world for me.

## I SAW THY FORM IN YOUTHFUL PRIME

I saw thy form in youthful prime,
Nor thought that pale decay
Would steal before the steps of time,
And waste its bloom away, Mary!
Yet still thy features wore that light
Which fleets not with the breath;
And life ne'er look'd more truly bright
Than in thy smile of death, Mary!

As streams that run o'er golden mines,
Yet humbly, calmly glide,
Nor seem to know the wealth that shines
Within their gentle tide, Mary!

So, veil'd beneath the simplest guise,
  Thy radiant genius shone,
And that which charm'd all other eyes
  Seem'd worthless in thy own, Mary!

If souls could always dwell above,
  Thou ne'er hadst left that sphere;
Or, could we keep the souls we love,
  We ne'er had lost thee here, Mary!
Though many a gifted mind we meet,
  Though fairest forms we see,
To live with them is far less sweet
  Than to remember thee, Mary!

## AT THE MID HOUR OF NIGHT

At the mid hour of night, when stars are weeping, I fly
To the lone vale we loved when life was warm in thine eye,
  And I think that if spirits can steal from the regions of air
  To revisit past scenes of delight, thou wilt come to me there,
And tell me our love is remember'd, even in the sky!

Then I sing the wild song it once was rapture to hear,
When our voices, commingling, breathed like one on the ear;
  And, as Echo far off through the vale my sad orison rolls,
  I think, oh, my love! 'tis thy voice from the kingdom of souls,
Faintly answering still the notes that once were so dear.

## THE LAST ROSE OF SUMMER

'Tis the last rose of summer
  Left blooming alone;
All her lovely companions
  Are faded and gone;
No flower of her kindred,
  No rosebud is nigh,
To reflect back her blushes,
  To give sigh for sigh.

I'll not leave thee, thou lone one!
  To pine on the stem;
Since the lovely are sleeping,
  Go, sleep thou with them.
Thus kindly I scatter
  Thy leaves o'er the bed,
Where thy mates of the garden
  Lie scentless and dead.

So soon may I follow,
  When friendships decay,
And from Love's shining circle
  The gems drop away.
When true hearts lie withered
  And fond ones are flown,

Oh! who would inhabit
This bleak world alone?

## EBENEZER ELLIOTT
(1781–1849)

### FOUNTAINS ABBEY *

Abbey! forever smiling pensively,
How like a thing of Nature dost thou rise
Amid her loveliest works! as if the skies,
Clouded with grief, were arched thy roof to be,
And the tall trees were copied all from thee!
Mourning thy fortunes while the waters dim
Flow like the memory of thy evening hymn,
Beautiful in their sorrowing sympathy;
As if they with a weeping sister wept,
Winds name thy name!
But thou, though sad, art calm,
And Time with thee his plighted troth hath kept;
For harebells† deck thy brow, and, at thy feet,

Where sleep the proud, the bee and redbreast meet,
Mixing thy sighs with Nature's lonely psalm.

---

* Fountains Abbey is a large Gothic ruin in Yorkshire. Completed in 1283, the structure was some 700 feet long. The grounds contain Robin Hood's Well; here legend says that a friar encountered a bold woodsman. In 1132 while the building was being erected, the monks lived under the Seven Sisters, ancient yew trees, that survived into the 19th century.

† The harebell is also called bluebell. It is a perennial herb, with bell-shaped flowers of blue.

## EDWARD HOVELL, LORD THURLOW
(1781–1829)

### WHEN IN THE WOODS

When in the woods I wander all alone,
The woods that are my solace and delight,
Which I more covet than a prince's throne,
My toil by day and canopy by night;
(Light heart, light foot, light food, and slumber light,
These lights shall light us to old age's gate,
While monarchs, whom rebellious dreams affright,
Heavy with fear, death's fearful summons wait;)
Whilst here I wander, pleased to be alone,
Weighing in thought the world's no happiness,
I cannot choose but wonder at its moan,
Since so plain joys the woody life can bless:
Then live who may where honeyed words prevail,
I with the deer, and with the nightingale!

## LEIGH HUNT
(1784–1859)

### JENNY KISS'D ME

Jenny kiss'd me when we met,
  Jumping from the chair she sat in;
Time, you thief, who love to get
  Sweets into your list, put that in!
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,
  Say that health and wealth have miss'd me,
Say I'm growing old, but add,
  Jenny kiss'd me.*

### AN ANGEL IN THE HOUSE

How sweet it were, if without feeble fright,
Or dying of the dreadful beauteous sight,
An angel came to us, and we could bear
To see him issue from the silent air
At evening in our room, and bend on ours
His divine eyes, and bring us from his bowers
News of dear friends, and children who have never
Been dead indeed,—as we shall know forever.

Alas! we think not what we daily see
About our hearths,—angels, that are to be,
Or may be if they will, and we prepare
Their souls and ours to meet in happy air;—
A child, a friend, a wife whose soft heart sings
In unison with ours, breeding its future wings.

* The inspiration for this poem was Jane Baillie Welsh Carlyle (1801–1866), the wife of Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881), the Scottish historian and essayist. He was the author of *The History of the French Revolution* (2 vols., 1837) and other works.

## HENRY KIRKE WHITE
(1785–1806)

### TO AN EARLY PRIMROSE

Mild offspring of a dark and sullen sire!
Whose modest form, so delicately fine,
  Was nursed in whirling storms,
  And cradled in the winds.

Thee, when young Spring first questioned Winter's sway,
And dared the sturdy blusterer to the fight,—
  Thee on this bank he threw
  To mark his victory.

In this low vale, the promise of the year,
Serene, thou openest to the nipping gale,
  Unnoticed and alone,
  Thy tender elegance.

So virtue blooms, brought forth amid the storms
Of chill adversity; in some lone walk
  Of life she rears her head,

Obscure and unobserved;

While every bleaching breeze that on her blows
Chastens her spotless purity of breast,
And hardens her to bear
Serene the ills of life.

## SOLITUDE

It is not that my lot is low,
That bids this silent tear to flow;
It is not grief that bids me moan,
It is that I am all alone.

In woods and glens I love to roam,
When the tired hedger hies him home;
Or by the woodland pool to rest,
When pale the star looks on its breast.

Yet when the silent evening sighs,
With hallow'd airs and symphonies,
My spirit takes another tone,
And sighs that it is all alone.

The autumn leaf is sear and dead,
It floats upon the water's bed;
I would not be a leaf to die
Without recording sorrow's sigh!

The woods and winds, with sullen wail,
Tell all the same unvaried tale;
I've none to smile when I am free,
And when I sigh, to sigh with me.

Yet in my dreams a form I view,
That thinks on me, and loves me too;
I start, and when the vision's flown,
I weep that I am all alone.

## JOHN WILSON
(1785–1854)

### THE EVENING CLOUD

A cloud lay cradled near the setting sun;
A gleam of crimson tinged its braided snow;
Long had I watched the glory moving on,
O'er the still radiance of the lake below;
Tranquil its spirit seemed and floated slow;
Even in its very motion there was rest;
While every breath of eve that chanced to blow
Wafted the traveller to the beauteous West.
Emblem, methought, of the departed soul,
To whose white robe the gleam of bliss is given;
And by the breath of mercy made to roll
Right onward to the golden gates of Heaven;
Where to the eye of Faith it peaceful lies,
And tells to man his glorious destinies.

## BARRY CORNWALL (BRYAN WALLER PROCTOR)
(1787–1874)

### TO THE SKYLARK: A SONNET

O earliest singer!
O care-charming bird!
Married to morning, by a sweeter hymn
Than priest e'er chanted from his cloister dim,
At midnight,—or veil'd virgin's holier word
At sunrise or the paler evening heard;
To which of all Heaven's young and lovely hours,
Who wreathe soft light in hyacinthine bowers,
Beautiful spirit, is thy suit preferr'd?
—Unlike the creatures of this low dull earth,
Still dost thou woo, although thy suit be won;
And thus thy mistress bright is pleased ever.
Oh! lose not thou this mark of finer birth;—
So may'st thou yet live on, from sun to sun,
Thy joy uncheck'd, thy sweet song silent never.

Lord Byron

## GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON
(1788–1824)

### STANZAS TO JESSY

There is a mystic thread of life
  So dearly wreath'd with mine alone,
That Destiny's relentless knife
  At once must sever both, or none.

There is a Form on which these eyes
  Have fondly gaz'd with such delight—
By day, that Form their joy supplies,
  And Dreams restore it, through the night.

There is a Voice whose tones inspire
  Such soften'd feelings in my breast,
I would not hear a Seraph Choir,
  Unless that voice could join the rest.

There is a Face whose Blushes tell
  Affection's tale upon the cheek,
But pallid at our fond farewell
  Proclaims more love than words can speak.

There is a Lip, which mine has prest,
  But none had ever prest before;
It vowed to make me sweetly blest,
  That mine alone should press it more.

There is a Bosom all my own,
  Has pillow'd oft this aching head,
A Mouth which smiles on me alone,
  An Eye, whose tears with mine are shed.

There are two Hearts whose movements thrill
  In unison so closely sweet,
That, Pulse to Pulse responsive, still,
  They Both must heave, or cease to beat.

There are two Souls, whose equal flow
  In gentle stream so calmly run,
That when they part—they part?—ah no!
  They cannot part—those Souls are One.

## WHEN WE TWO PARTED

When we two parted
In silence and tears,
Half broken-hearted
To sever for years,
Pale grew thy cheek and cold,
Colder thy kiss;

Truly that hour foretold
Sorrow to this!

The dew of the morning
Sunk chill on my brow;
It felt like the warning
Of what I feel now.
Thy vows are all broken,
And light is thy fame:
I hear thy name spoken
And share in its shame.

They name thee before me,
A knell to mine ear;
A shudder comes o'er me—
Why wert thou so dear?
They know not I knew thee
Who knew thee too well:
Long, long shall I rue thee
Too deeply to tell.

In secret we met:
In silence I grieve
That thy heart could forget,
Thy spirit deceive.
If I should meet thee
After long years,
How should I greet thee?—
With silence and tears.

## FOR MUSIC

There be none of Beauty's daughters
  With a magic like thee;
And like music on the waters
  Is thy sweet voice to me:
When, as if its sound were causing
The charmed ocean's pausing,
The waves lie still and gleaming,
And the lull'd winds seem dreaming:

And the midnight moon is weaving
  Her bright chain o'er the deep,
Whose breast is gently heaving
  As an infant's asleep:
So the spirit bows before thee
To listen and adore thee;
With a full but soft emotion,
Like the swell of Summer's ocean.

## SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellow'd to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impair'd the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,—
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

## PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY
(1792–1822)

### THE CLOUD

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
  From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
  In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
  The sweet birds every one.
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
  As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
  And whiten the green plains under;
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
  And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
  And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
  While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers
  Lightning, my pilot, sits;

In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,—
It struggles and howls at fits;
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea;
Over the rills and the crags and the hills,
Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack
When the morning star shines dead.
As on the jag of a mountain-crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings;
And when sunset may breathe from the lit sea beneath
Its ardors of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest on mine airy nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbed maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon,

Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

## LOVE SLUMBERS ON

Music when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory—
Odors, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heap'd for the beloved's bed;
And so thy thoughts, when Thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

## JOHN CLARE
(1793–1864)

### MAID OF THE WILDERNESS

Maid of the wilderness,
Sweet in thy rural dress,
Fond thy rich lips I press
  Under this tree.

Morning her health bestows,
Sprinkles dews on the rose,
That by the bramble grows:
  Maid happy be.
Womanhood round thee glows,
  Wander with me.

The rest-harrow* blooming,
The sun just a-coming,
Grass and bushes illuming,
  And the spreading oak tree;
Come hither, sweet Nelly.

The morning is loosing

Its incense for thee.
The pea-leaf has dews on;
Love wander with me.

We'll walk by the river,
And love more than ever;
There's naught shall dissever
My fondness from thee.

Soft ripples the water,
Flags rustle like laughter,
And fish follow after;
Leaves drop from the tree.
Nelly, Beauty's own daughter,
Love, wander with me.

---

* A Eurasian plant (*Ononis arvensis*) with pink or purple flowers.

## YOUNG JENNY

The cockchafer* hums down the rut-rifted lane
Where the wild roses hang and the woodbines† entwine,
And the shrill squeaking bat makes his circles again
Round the side of the tavern close by the sign.
The sun is gone down like a wearisome queen,
In curtains the richest that ever were seen.

The dew falls on flowers in a mist of small rain,
And, beating the hedges, low fly the barn owls;
The moon with her horns is just peeping again,
And deep in the forest the dog-badger howls;
In best bib and tucker then wanders my Jane
By the side of the woodbines which grow in the lane.

On a sweet eventide I walk by her side;
In green hoods the daisies have shut up their eyes.
Young Jenny is handsome without any pride;
Her eyes (O how bright!) have the hue of the skies.
O 'tis pleasant to walk by the side of my Jane
At the close of the day, down the mossy green lane.

We stand by the brook, by the gate, and the stile,
While the even star hangs out his lamp in the sky;
And on her calm face dwells a sweet sunny smile,
While her soul fondly speaks through the light of her eye.
Sweet are the moments while waiting for Jane;

'Tis her footsteps I hear coming down the green lane.

---

* A large European beetle (*Melolontha vulgaris*) that is destructive to vegetation.

† The woodbine or woodbind (*Lonicera periclymenum*) is a climbing plant with flowers of strong fragrance.

## FELICIA DOROTHEA HEMANS
(1794–1835)

### DEATH SONG OF THE SWAN

"Summer, I depart!
O light and laughing summer, fare thee well!
No song the less through thy rich woods will swell,
For one, one broken heart.

And fare ye well, young flowers!
Ye will not mourn; ye will shed odor still,
And wave in glory, coloring every rill,
Known to my youth's fresh hours.

And ye, bright founts, that lie
Far in the whispering forests, lone and deep,
My wing no more shall stir your shadowy sleep—
—Sweet waters! I must die.

Will ye not send one tone
Of sorrow through the pines? one murmur low?
Shall not the green leaves from your voices know
That I, your child, am gone?

No, ever glad and free!
Ye have no sounds a tale of death to tell,
Waves, joyous waves, flow on, and fare ye well!
Ye will not mourn for me.

But *thou*, sweet boon, too late
Pour'd on my parting breath, vain gift of song!
Why com'st thou thus, o'ermastering, rich and strong,
In the dark hour of fate?

Only to wake the sighs
Of echo-voices from their sparry* cell;
Only to say—O sunshine and blue skies!
O life and love, farewell!"

* Like spar, a crystalline mineral; lustrous.

## JAMES JOSEPH CALLANAN
(1795–1829)

### THE NIGHT WAS STILL

The night was still, the air was balm,
  Soft dews around were weeping;
No whisper rose o'er ocean's calm,
  Its waves in light were sleeping;
With Mary on the beach I strayed,
  The stars beam'd joys above me;
I press'd her hand, and said, "Sweet maid,
  Oh! tell me do you love me?"

With modest air she drooped her head,
  Her cheek of beauty veiling;
Her bosom heav'd—no word she said;
  I mark'd her strife of feeling;
"Oh speak my doom, dear maid," I cried,
  "By yon bright heaven above thee";

She gently raised her eyes, and sighed,
"Too well you know I love thee."

## JOHN KEATS
(1795–1821)

### ON THE GRASSHOPPER AND THE CRICKET

The poetry of earth is never dead:
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead;
That is the grasshopper's—he takes the lead
In summer luxury—he has never done
With his delights, for when tired out with fun,
He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.
The poetry of earth is ceasing never:
On a lone winter evening, when the frost
Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills
The cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
And seems to one in drowsiness half lost
The grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

## THOMAS HOOD
(1799–1845)

### SLEEP BY THE SEA

Friends, when you think I am like to die,
Carry me where the sea is roaring:
There on my last bed let me lie,
And list to the long wave landward pouring—
Beating, beating,
And ever repeating
The cry it cried, when it first was hurled,
With a myriad shocks
On the barrier-rocks
In the very birthday of the world.

And—if I could die within sound of the sea—
The voices of all who e'er loved and knew me,
To mingle with hers, who is dearest to me,
Its murmur would bring—to sleep to woo me—
Throbbing, throbbing,
And plaintively sobbing
As erst it sighed when the night and morn
Had faded away

Of the first fair day,
When this beautiful world of ours was born.

Oh, there, in a churchyard, high on a cliff,
In how deep asleep, from the vain endeavor
Of longing and life, I could rest me—if
The sea its wild lullaby sang forever,
Beating, beating,
And still repeating
The cry it cried, when it first was hurled
With a myriad shocks
On the barrier-rocks
In the very birthday of the world.

## I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER

I remember, I remember,
The house where I was born,
The little window where the sun
Came peeping in at morn;
He never came a wink too soon,
Nor brought too long a day;
But now, I often wish the night
Had borne my breath away.

I remember, I remember
The roses, red and white,
The violets, and the lily cups,*
Those flowers made of light!
The lilacs where the robin built,
And where my brother set
The laburnum† on his birthday,—
The tree is living yet!

I remember, I remember
Where I was used to swing,
And thought the air must rush as fresh
To swallows on the wing;
My spirit flew in feathers then,
That is so heavy now,
And summer pools could hardly cool
The fever on my brow!

I remember, I remember

The fir trees dark and high;
I used to think their slender tops
Were close against the sky:
It was a childish ignorance,
But now 'tis little joy
To know I'm farther off from Heav'n
Than when I was a boy.

---

* The lily cup or lily bell, is the flower of the lily of the valley (*Convallaria majalis*).

† An ornamental tree (*Laburnum anagyroides*) with bright golden flowers, popular as Easter decoration. It represents happiness, beauty, and grace.

## GEORGE DENISON PRENTICE
(1802–1870)

### WRITTEN AT MY MOTHER'S GRAVE

The trembling dew drops fall
  Upon the opening flowers like souls at rest;
The stars shine gloriously, and all
  Save me are blest.

Mother, I love your grave,
  The violet, with its blossoms blue and mild,
Waves o'er they head; when shall it wave
  Above thy child?

'Tis a sweet, sweet flower, yet must
  Its bright leaves to the coming tempest bow;
Dear mother, 'tis thine emblem; dust
  Is on thy brow.

And I could love to die;
  To leave untasted life's dark bitter streams—
By thee, as erst in childhood lie,
  And share thy dreams.

But I must linger here
  To stain the plumage of my sinless years,
And mourn the hopes to childhood dear,
  With bitter tears.

Aye, I must linger here,
  A lonely branch upon a withered tree,
Whose last frail leaf, untimely sere,
  Went down with thee.

Oft from life's withered bower,
  In still communion with the past, I turn
And muse on thee, the only flower
  In memory's urn.

Where is thy spirit flown?
  I gaze above—thy look is imaged there;
I listen—and thy gentle tone
  Is on the air.

O, come while I here press
  My brow upon thy grave; and in those mild
And thrilling tones of tenderness,
  Bless, bless thy child!

## ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON
(1809–1892)

### CROSSING THE BAR

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning from the bar,
When I put out to sea,
But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.
Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark:
For though from out our bourne* of Time and Place
The Flood may bear me far,

I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

---

* Bourne here means ‘boundary’ or ‘limit.’

## SIR SAMUEL FERGUSON
(1810–1886)

### THE FAIR-HAIRED GIRL
*From the Irish*

The sun has set, the stars are still,
The red moon hides behind the hill;
The tide has left the brown beach bare,
The birds have fled the upper air;
Upon her branch the lone cuckoo
Is chanting still her sad adieu;
And you, my fair-haired girl, must go
Across the salt sea under woe!

I through love have learned three things:
Sorrow, sin and death it brings;
Yet day by day my heart within
Dares shame and sorrow, death and sin.
Maiden, you have aimed the dart
Rankling in my ruined heart:
Maiden, may the God above
Grant you grace to grant me love!

Sweeter than the viol's string*

And the notes that blackbirds sing;
Brighter than the dewdrops rare
Is the maiden wondrous fair:
Like the silver swans at play
Is her neck as bright as day!
Woe is me that e'er my sight
Dwelt on charms so deadly bright!

* The viol is the medieval ancestor of the violin.

## THOMAS BUCHANAN READ
(1822–1872)

### THE SUMMER SHOWER

Before the stout harvesters falleth the grain,
As when the strong storm-wind is reaping the plain,
And loiters the boy in the briery lane;
But yonder aslant comes the silvery rain,
Like a long line of spears brightly burnished and tall.

Adown the white highway like cavalry fleet,
It dashes the dust with its numberless feet.
Like a murmurless school, in their leafy retreat,
The wild birds sit listening the drops round them beat;
And the boy crouches close to the blackberry wall.

The swallows alone take the storm on their wing,
And, taunting the tree-sheltered laborers, sing,
Like pebbles the rain breaks the face of the spring,
While a bubble darts up from each widening ring;
And the boy in dismay hears the loud shower fall.

But soon are the harvesters tossing their sheaves;

The robin darts out from his bower of leaves;
The wren peereth forth from the moss-covered eaves;
And the rain-spattered urchin now gladly perceives
That the beautiful bow bendeth over them all.

## WILLIAM ALLINGHAM
(1824–1889)

### AMONG THE HEATHER

One evening walking out I o'ertook a modest colleen,
When the wind was blowing cool and the harvest leaves were falling.
"Is our road, by chance, the same? Might we travel on together?"
"Oh, I keep the mountainside (she replied) among the heather."

"Your mountain air is sweet when the days are long and sunny,
When the grass grows round the rocks, and the whin-bloom* smells like honey;
But the winter's coming fast, with its foggy, snowy weather,
And you'll find it bleak and chill on your hill among the heather."

She praised her mountain home; and I'll praise it too with reason,
For where Molly is there's sunshine and flowers at every season.
Be the moorland black or white does it signify a feather,
Now I know the way by heart, every part, among the heather?

The sun goes down in haste and the night falls thick and stormy;
Yet I'd travel twenty miles to the welcome that's before me;

Singing hi for Eskydun,† in the teeth of wind and weather!
Love'll warm me as I go through the snow, among the heather.

---

* This is the gorse or furze (*Ulex europæus*), a spiny evergreen shrub with yellow flowers.

† Eskydun is an Irish poetical allusion for good times. Halcyon days has a similar meaning. Fiddler's green might be another synonym.

## THE CHAPEL BY THE SHORE

By the shore a plot of ground
Clips a ruin'd chapel round,
Buttress'd with a grassy mound,
  Where day and night and day go by,
And bring no touch of human sound.

Washing of the lonely seas,
Shaking of the guardian trees,
Piping of the salted breeze:
  Day and night and day go by
To the ceaseless tune of these.

Or when, as wind and waters keep
A hush more dead than any sleep,
Still morns to stiller evenings creep,
  And day and night and day go by—
Here the stillness is most deep.

And the ruins, lapsed again
Into nature's wide domain,
Sow themselves with seed and grain,
  As day and night and day go by,
And hoard June's sun and April's rain.

Here fresh funeral tears were shed;
And now the graves are also dead,

And suckers from the ash tree spread,
As day and night and day go by,
And stars move calmly overhead.

## PHOEBE CARY
(1824–1871)

### COMING HOME

O brothers and sisters, growing old,
  Do you all remember yet
That home, in the shade of the rustling trees,
  Where once our household met?

Do you know how we used to come from school,
  Through the summer's pleasant heat;
With the yellow fennel's golden dust
  On our tired little feet?

And how sometimes in an idle mood
  We loitered by the way;
And stopped in the woods to gather flowers
  And in the fields to play;

Till warned by the deep'ning shadows' fall
  That told of the coming night,
We climbed to the top of the last, long hill,
  And saw our home in sight?

And, brother and sisters, older now
  Than she whose life is o'er,
Do you think of the mother's loving face,
  That looked from the open door?

Alas, for the changing things of time;
  That home in the dust is low;
And that loving smile was hid from us,
  In the darkness, long ago!

And we have come to life's last hill,
  From which our weary eyes
Can almost look on the home that shines
  Eternal in the skies.

So, brothers and sisters, as we go,
  Still let us move as one,
Always together keeping step,
  Till the march of life is done.

For that mother, who waited for us here,
  Wearing a smile so sweet,
Now waits on the hills of paradise
  For her children's coming feet!

## GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS
(1824–1892)

### SONG

Rushes lean over the water,
  Shells lie on the shore;
And thou, the blue Ocean's daughter,
  Sleep'st soft in the song of its roar.

Clouds sail over the ocean;
  White gusts fleck its calm;
But never its wildest motion
  Thy beautiful rest should harm.

White feet on the edge of the billow
  Mock its smooth-seething cream;
Hard ribs of beach-sand thy pillow,
  And a noble lover thy dream.

Like tangles of seaweed streaming
  Over a perfect pearl,

Thy fair hair fringes thy dreaming,
O sleeping Lido* girl!

* The Lido is one of the barrier islands that forms the lagoon of Venice. It is about 7 miles long and 985 yards wide. A town and a hamlet are on the island.

## EGYPTIAN SERENADE

Sing again the song you sung
When we were together young—
When there were but you and I
Underneath the summer sky.

Sing the song, and o'er and o'er
Though I know that nevermore
Will it seem the song you sung
When we were together young.

## O LISTEN TO THE SOUNDING SEA

O listen to the sounding sea
  That beats on the remorseless shore,
O listen! for that sound will be
  When our wild hearts shall beat no more.

O listen well and listen long!
  For sitting folded close to me,
You could not hear a sweeter song
  Than that hoarse murmur of the sea.

## SPRING SONG

A bird sang sweet and strong
  In the top of the highest tree,
He said, "I pour out my heart in song
  For the summer that soon shall be."

But deep in the shady wood,
  Another bird sang, "I pour
My heart on the solemn solitude
  For the springs that return no more."

## ROBERT BARRY COFFIN
(1826–1888)

### SHIPS AT SEA

I have ships that went to sea
    More than fifty years ago;
None have yet come home to me,
    But are sailing to and fro.
I have seen them in my sleep,
Plunging through the shoreless deep,
With tattered sails and battered hulls,
While around them screamed the gulls,
    Flying low, flying low.

I have wondered why they stayed
    From me, sailing round the world;
And I've said, "I'm half afraid
    That their sails will ne'er be furled."
Great the treasures that they hold,
Silks, and plumes, and bars of gold;
While the spices which they bear
Fill with fragrance all the air,
    As they sail, as they sail.

Ah! each sailor in the port
    Knows that I have ships at sea,
Of the waves and winds the sport,
    And the sailors pity me.
Oft they come and with me walk,
Cheering me with hopeful talk,
Till I put my fears aside,
And, contented, watch the tide
    Rise and fall, rise and fall.

I have waited on the piers,
    Gazing for them down the bay,
Days and nights for many years,
    Till I turned heart-sick away.
But the pilots, when they land,
Stop and take me by the hand,
Saying, "You will live to see
Your proud vessels come from sea,
    One and all, one and all."

So I never quite despair,
    Nor let hope or courage fail;
And some day, when skies are fair,
    Up the bay my ships will sail.
I shall buy then all I need,—
Prints to look at, books to read,
Horses, wines, and works of art,—
Everything except a heart.
    That is lost, that is lost.

Once when I was pure and young,
    Richer, too, than I am now,
Ere a cloud was o'er me flung,
    Or a wrinkle creased my brow,
There was one whose heart was mine;
But she's something now divine,
And though come my ships from sea,
They can bring no heart to me
    Evermore, evermore.

## GEORGE MEREDITH
(1828–1909)

### DIRGE IN WOODS

A wind sways the pines.
    And below
Not a breath of wild air;
Still as the mosses that glow
On the flooring and over the lines
Of the roots here and there.

The pine tree drops its dead;
They are quiet, as under the sea.
Overhead, overhead
Rushes life in a race.
As the clouds the clouds chase;
    And we go.
And we drop like the fruits of the tree.

Even we.
Even so.

## DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI
(1828–1882)

### LILITH

Of Adam's first wife, Lilith, it is told
(The witch he loved before the gift of Eve,)
That, ere the snake's, her sweet tongue could deceive,
And her enchanted hair was the first gold.
And still she sits, young while the earth is old,
And, subtly of herself contemplative,
Draws men to watch the bright web she can weave,
Till heart and body and life are in its hold.

The rose and poppy are her flowers; for where
Is he not found, O Lilith, whom shed scent
And soft-shed kisses and soft sleep shall snare?
Lo! as that youth's eyes burned at thine, so went
Thy spell through him, and left his straight neck bent
And round his heart one strangling golden hair.

## FITZ-JAMES O'BRIEN
(1829–1862)

### STRAWBERRIES

I

The garden was filled with odors
  From jasmine* and heliotrope,†
And the tender moss rose,‡ muffled
  In its beautiful velvet cope;
White currants,§ like beads of amber,
  Strung upon sea-green silk,
Mingled their spicy clusters
  With snowberries‖ white as milk.

II

I watched her plucking the strawberries,
  And bending over the bank,
Where the luscious rubies lay hiding,
  As if from her search they shrank;
And when she bit them, she opened
  Lips ripe and red as they.
Ah! if I had been the strawberries,
  I would not have hidden away.

III

"Are you not fond of strawberries?
  Why don't you pluck and eat
See, here is a noble fellow,
  Juicy, and red, and sweet.
Don't stand there looking so solemn,
  As if you thought 't was a sin
To eat of such delicate morsels,
  But open your mouth and begin."

IV

"Ah! Imogen, dear," I answered,
  "I care for no fruit but one:
'T is as ripe and red as this berry,
  And as full of the blood of the sun.
But you selfishly hold it from me,
  Nor offer me even a part"
"What is this fruit?" she questioned.
  "This fruit," I said, "is your heart!"

V

The strawberry dropped from her fingers,
  And she stretched out her little hand,
And I knew that, instead of the fruit, it held
  The sweetest heart in the land.
So we left the strawberries lying
  In their shadowy leaves that day,

And silently walked in the garden,
While the long hours stole away.

---

* Carolina or yellow jasmine (*Gelsemium sempervirens*), an ornamental plant of the olive family, with fragrant usually white flowers.

† An herb (*Heliotropium peruvianum*) with fragrant white or purplish flowers.

‡ A variety of the rose with mossy leaves of the calyx and stem.

§ A bush producing small acidic berries used for making jelly; species *Ribes*.

‖ A bushy shrub (*Symphoricarpos raccemosus*) with white berries. Sometimes called waxberry.

## EMILY DICKINSON
(1830–1886)

### HOPE

"Hope" is the thing with feathers—
That perches in the soul—
And sings the tune without the words—
And never stops—at all—

And sweetest—in the Gale—is heard—
And sore must be the storm—
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm—

I've heard it in the chillest land—
And on the strangest Sea—
Yet—never—in Extremity,
It asked a crumb—of me.

## CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI
(1830–1894)

### ECHO

Come to me in the silence of the night;
  Come in the speaking silence of a dream;
Come with the soft round cheeks and eyes as bright
  As sunlight on a stream;
    Come back in tears,
O memory, hope, love of finished years.

O dream how sweet, too sweet, too bitter sweet,
  Whose wakening should have been in Paradise,
Where souls brimful of love abide and meet;
  Where thirsting longing eyes
    Watch the slow door
That opening, letting in, lets out no more.

Yet come to me in dreams, that I may live
  My very life again though cold in death:
Come back to me in dreams, that I may give
  Pulse for pulse, breath for breath:

Speak low, lean low,
As long ago, my love, how long ago.

## MARY EMILY BRADLEY
(1835–1898)

### LITTLE SNOWDROP *

Once, in the time of childhood's sweet romances,
I watched a snowstorm gathering in the sky,
And pleased myself with idle dreams and fancies
About the airy flakes that fluttered by.

"They are not snowflakes, they are winter fairies,
That fly about to see what children do;
I mean to make a wish," I cried, "and there is
The very one to make my wish come true!"

It floated down, a delicate snow-feather,
And on the window coping lightly lay;
I laughed with glee and clapped my hands together—
"It grants my wish; it doesn't fly away!"

So through the night my fairies, trooping lightly,
Their curling wreaths and dainty fleeces piled,
And when the next day's sun shone on them brightly,
It shone nowhere upon a happier child.

For while I slept, without a dream for warning,
The wish I wished had come exactly true,
And in my mother's arms I found that morning
A baby sister with her eyes of blue.

I had not guessed there could be such a turning
Of childish fancy to the actual thing;
Though many a time, with unacknowledged yearning,
I pictured all the sweetness it would bring.

And yet not all,—there are no words for showing
Her sweetness, nor the joy it brought to me,
A little snowdrop of the winter's growing,
No summer blossom was as fair as she.

Her cheeks had such a color, faint and tender,
As brier roses† in the hedges wear;
And as she grew, a soft, sunshiny splendor
Seemed always floating from her golden hair.

It was as if an angel, not a sister,
Looked out at me from her clear, shining eyes;
Alas! it was not long before they missed her,
The angels she resembled in the skies!

One summer night, like sudden moonlight streaming
Across the threshold of the door, they came;
I saw their faces, and I was not dreaming,
I heard them call the baby by her name.

They gathered swiftly round my little sister,
  And one flew downward, with out-reaching hand:
"Come, little Snowdrop!"—and he softly kissed her—
  "The Father wants you in the happy land!"

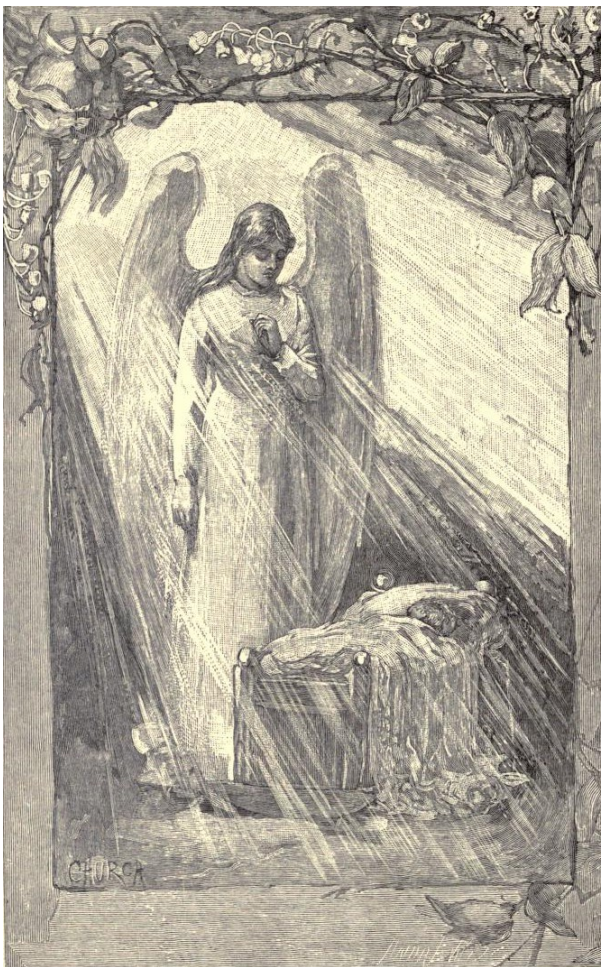
My mother said I dreamed, for I was lying
  Upon the floor, her cradle-bed beside;
Tired out with watching and with bitter crying,
  She would not wake me when the baby died.

It was not dreaming, though; I saw them clearly;
  Some day, perhaps, it may be mine to see
The baby sister that I loved so dearly
  Leading the angels down to look for me!

---

* The snowdrop is an herb plant (*Galanthus nivalis*) whose nodding white flowers appear while snow is still on the ground.

† Brier rose or dog-rose, a European wild rose (*Rosa canina*) with light pink flowers.


CHURCH

## NANCY AMELIA PRIEST (MRS. WAKEFIELD)
(1836–1870)

### OVER THE RIVER

Over the river they beckon to me,
  Loved ones who've crossed to the farther side;
The gleam of their snowy robes I see,
  But their voices are drowned by the rushing tide.
There's one with ringlets of sunny gold,
  And eyes the reflection of heaven's own blue;
He crossed in the twilight gray and cold,
  And the pale mist hid him from mortal view;
We saw not the angels that met him there,
  The gates of the city we could not see;
Over the river, over the river,
  My brother stands waiting to welcome me.

Over the river the boatman pale
  Carried another, the household pet;
Her brown curls waved in the gentle gale—
  Darling Minnie! I see her yet.
She crossed on her bosom her dimpled hands,
  And fearlessly entered the phantom bark:

We watched it glide from the silver sands,
And all our sunshine grew strangely dark.
We know she is safe on the farther side,
Where all the ransomed and angels be;
Over the river, the mystic river,
My childhood's angel is waiting for me.

For none return from those spirit shores
Who cross with the boatman cold and pale;
We hear the dip of the golden oars,
And catch a gleam of the snowy sail;
And lo! they have passed from our yearning hearts,
They cross the stream and are gone for aye!
We may not sunder the veil apart
That hides from our visions the gates of day.
We only know that their barks no more
May sail with us o'er life's stormy sea;
Yet somewhere, I know, on the unseen shore
They watch and beckon and wait for me.

And I sit and think when the sunset's gold
Is flushing river and hill and shore,
I shall one day stand by the water cold,
And list for the sound of the boatman's oar;
And when perchance the well-known hail
Again shall echo along the strand,
I shall pass from sight with the boatman pale,
To the better shore of the spirit land.
I shall know the loved who have gone before,
And joyfully sweet will the meeting be,

When over the river, the peaceful river,
The angel of death shall carry me.

## GEORGE SIGERSON
(1836–1925)

### MO CÁILÍN DONN*

The blush is on the flower, and the bloom is on the tree,
And the bonnie, bonnie sweet birds are caroling their glee;
And the dews upon the grass are made diamonds by the sun,
All to deck a path of glory for my own *Cáilín Donn*!
O fair she is! O rare she is! O dearer still to me!
More welcome than the green leaf to winter-stricken tree,
More welcome than the blossom to the weary, dusty bee,
Is the coming of my true love—my own *Cáilín Donn*!

O Sycamore! O Sycamore! wave, wave your banners green—
Let all your pennons flutter, O Beech! before my queen!
Ye fleet and honeyed breezes, to kiss her hand ye run;
But my heart has passed before ye to my own *Cáilín Donn*!
O fair she is! O rare she is! O dearer still to me!
More welcome than the green leaf to winter-stricken tree,
More welcome than the blossom to the weary, dusty bee,
Is the coming of my true love—my own *Cáilín Donn*!

Ring out, ring out, O Linden! your merry leafy bells!

Unveil your brilliant torches, Chestnut! to the dells;
Strew, strew the glade with splendor, for morn it cometh on!
O the morn of all delight to me—my own *Cáilin Donn*!
O fair she is! O rare she is! O dearer still to me!
More welcome than the green leaf to winter-stricken tree,
More welcome than the blossom to the weary, dusty bee,
Is the coming of my true love—my own *Cáilin Donn*!

She is coming, where we parted, where she wanders every day;
There's a gay surprise before her who thinks me far away!
O like hearing bugles triumph when the fight of Freedom's won,
Is the joy around your footsteps, my own *Cáilin Donn*!
O fair she is! O rare she is! O dearer still to me!
More welcome than the green leaf to winter-stricken tree,
More welcome than the blossom to the weary, dusty bee,
Is your coming, O my true love—my own *Cáilin Donn*!

* *Cáilin donn* or *colleen dhun* is Irish Gaelic for 'brown-haired girl.'

## SADIE (SARAH WILLIAMS)
(1837–1868)

### MUSIC AT NIGHT

Ripple of waves upon the moonlit shore,
Chiming of voices silent evermore,
Shining of summer light on southern seas,
Murmur of doves among the forest trees,
Perfume of growing vines and clover lea,*
Scent, sound, and sight they all come back to me—
All of delight my life hath ever known,
Gathered and scattered in one dulcet tone.

* Lea is a poetic word for 'meadow.'

## THOMAS HARDY
(1840–1928)

### THE HOUSE OF HOSPITALITIES

Here we broached the Christmas barrel,
  Pushed up the charred log-ends;
Here we sang the Christmas carol,
  And called in friends.

Time has tired me since we met here
  When the folk now dead were young,
Since the viands were outset here
  And quaint songs sung.

And the worm has bored the viol
  That used to lead the tune,
Rust eaten out the dial
  That struck night's noon.

Now no Christmas brings in neighbors,
  And the New Year comes unlit;
Where we sang the mole now labors,
  And spiders knit.

Yet at midnight if here walking,
  When the moon sheets wall and tree,
I see forms of old time talking,
    Who smile on me.

## THE REMINDER

While I watch the Christmas blaze
Paint the room with ruddy rays,
Something makes my vision glide
To the frosty scene outside.

There, to reach a rotting berry,
Toils a thrush,—constrained to very
Dregs of food by sharp distress,
Taking such with thankfulness.

Why, O starving bird, when I
One day's joy would justify,
And put misery out of view,
Do you make me notice you!

## AN AUGUST MIDNIGHT

I

A shaded lamp and a waving blind,
And the beat of a clock from a distant floor:
On this scene enter—winged, horned, and spined—
A longlegs, a moth, and a dumbledore;*
While 'mid my page there idly stands
A sleepy fly, that rubs its hands . . .

II

Thus meet we five, in this still place,
At this point of time, at this point in space.
—My quests besmear my new-penned line,
Or bang at the lamp and fall supine.
"God's humblest, they!" I muse. Yet why?
They know Earth-secrets that know not I.

* A 'bumblebee.'

Clouds spout upon her
  Their waters amain
  In ruthless disdain,—
Her who but lately
  Had shivered with pain
As at touch of dishonor
If there had lit on her
So coldly, so straightly
  Such arrows of rain:

One who to shelter
  Her delicate head
Would quicken and quicken
  Each tentative tread
If drops chanced to pelt her
  That summertime spills
  In dust-paven rills
When thunder clouds thicken
  And birds close their bills.

Would that I lay there
  And she were housed here!
Or better, together
Were folded away there
Exposed to one weather
We both,—who would stray there

When sunny the day there,
  Or evening was clear
  At the prime of the year.

Soon will be growing
  Green blades from her mound,
And daisies be showing
  Like stars on the ground,
Till she form part of them—
Ay—the sweet heart of them,
Loved beyond measure
With a child's pleasure
  All her life's round.

## JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY
(1844–1890)

### A WHITE ROSE

The red rose whispers of passion,
And the white rose breathes of love;
O, the red rose is a falcon,
And the white rose is a dove.

But I send you a cream-white rosebud
With a flush on its petal tips;
For the love that is purest and sweetest
Has a kiss of desire on the lips.

## JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY
(1849–1916)

### WHEN THE FROST IS ON THE PUNKIN

When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock,
And you hear the kyouck and gobble of the struttin' turkey-cock,
And the clackin' of the guineys, and the cluckin' of the hens,
And the rooster's hallylooyer as he tiptoes on the fence;
O, it's then the time a feller is a-feelin' at his best,
With the risin' sun to greet him from a night of peaceful rest,
As he leaves the house, bareheaded, and goes out to feed the stock,
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

They's something kindo' harty-like about the atmusfere
When the heat of summer's over and the coolin' fall is here—
Of course we miss the flowers, and the blossoms on the trees,
And the mumble of the hummin'-birds and buzzin' of the bees;
But the air's so appetizin'; and the landscape through the haze
Of a crisp and sunny morning of the airly autumn days
Is a pictur' that no painter has the colorin' to mock—
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

The husky, rusty russel of the tossels of the corn,
And the raspin' of the tangled leaves as golden as the morn;
The stubble in the furries—kindo' lonesome-like, but still
A-preachin' sermuns to us of the barns they growed to fill;
The strawstack in the medder, and the reaper in the shed;
The hosses in theyr stalls below—the clover overhead!—
O, it sets my hart a-clickin' like the tickin' of a clock,
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

Then your apples all is gethered, and the ones a feller keeps
Is poured around the cellar-floor in red and yaller heaps;
And your cider-makin's over, and your wimmern-folks is through
With theyr mince and apple-butter, and theyr souse and sausage too!...
I don't know how to tell it—but ef such a thing could be
As the angels wantin' boardin', and they'd call around on *me*—
I'd want to 'commodate 'em—all the whole-indurin' flock—
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

## FRANCIS WILLIAM BOURDILLON
(1852–1921)

### LIGHT

The night has a thousand eyes
And the day but one,
Yet the light of the bright world dies
With the dying sun.

The mind has a thousand eyes,
And the heart but one;
Yet the light of a whole life dies
When love is done.

## EDITH M. THOMAS
(1854–1925)

### "FROST TONIGHT"

Apple-green west and an orange bar,
And the crystal eye of a lone, one star...
And, "Child take the shears and cut what you will,
Frost tonight—so clear and dead-still."

Then I sally forth, half sad, half proud,
And I come to the velvet, imperial crowd,
The wine-red, the gold, the crimson, the pied,
The dahlias that reign by the garden-side.

The dahlias I might not touch till tonight!
A gleam of the shears in the fading light,
And I gather them all—the splendid throng,
And in one great sheath I bore them along.

In my garden of Life with its all-late flowers,
I heed a Voice in the shrinking hours:

"Frost tonight—so clear and dead-still"...
Half sad, half proud, my arms I fill.

## KATHARINE TYNAN
(1859–1931)

### THE MOTHER

I am the pillars of the house;
  The keystone of the arch am I.
Take me away, and roof and wall
  Would fall to ruin utterly.

I am the fire upon the hearth,
  I am the light of the good sun.
I am the heat that warms the earth,
  Which else were colder than a stone.

At me the children warm their hands;
  I am their light of love alive.
Without me cold the hearthstone stands,
  Nor could the precious children thrive.

I am the twist that holds together
  The children in its sacred ring,
Their knot of love, from whose close tether
  No lost child goes a-wandering.

I am the house from floor to roof.
I deck the walls, the board I spread;
I spin the curtains, warp and woof,*
And shake the down to be their bed.

I am their wall against all danger,
Their door against the wind and snow.
Thou Whom a woman laid in manger,
Take me not till the children grow!

* Warp and woof: warp are the fixed threads that run the long way of a fabric, crossing the woof, that are the threads that run back and forth in a loom. The phrase "warp and woof" also means 'base' or 'foundation.' It is apropos to note that symbolically spinning is associated with Fate, and the accouterments of spinning are often seen with images of Mother goddesses.

## ARTHUR SYMONS
(1865–1945)

### IN AUTUMN

Frail autumn lights upon the leaves
Beacon the ending of the year;
The windy rains are here,
Wet nights, and blowing winds about the eaves.

Here in the valley, mists begin
To breathe about the river side
The breath of autumntide;
The dark fields wait to take the harvest in.

And you, and you are far away.
Ah, this it is, and not the rain
Now loud against the pane,
That takes the light and color from the day!

Sweet, can I sing you the song of your kisses?
How soft is this one, how subtle this is,
How fluttering swift as a bird's kiss that is,
As a bird that taps at a leafy lattice;
How this one clings and how that uncloses
From bud to flower in the way of roses;
And this through laughter and that through weeping
Swims to the brim where Love lies sleeping;
And this in a pout I snatch, and capture
That in the ecstasy of rapture,
When the odorous red-rose petals part
That my lips may find their way to the heart
Of the rose of the world, your lips, my rose.
But no song knows
The way of my heart to the heart of my rose.

## W. B. YEATS
(1865–1939)

### AN OLD SONG RESUNG

Down by the salley* gardens my love and I did meet;
She passed the salley gardens with little snow-white feet.
She bid me take love easy as the leaves grow on the tree;
But I, being young and foolish, with her would not agree.

In a field by the river my love and I did stand,
And on my leaning shoulder she laid her snow-white hand.
She bid me take life easy as the grass grows on the weirs;†
But I was young and foolish, and now am full of tears.

---

* 'Willow.'

† A weir is a 'small dam.'

## THE FISH

Although you hide in the ebb and flow
Of the pale tide when the moon has set,
The people of coming days will know
About the casting out of my net,
And how you have leaped times out of mind
Over the little silver cords,
And think that you were hard and unkind,
And blame you with many bitter words.

## RICHARD LE GALLIENNE
(1866–1947)

### A CHILD'S EVENSONG

The sun is weary, for he ran
So far and fast today;
The birds are weary, for who sang
So many songs as they?
The bees and butterflies at last
Are tired out, for just think too
How many gardens through the day
Their little wings have fluttered through.
And so, as all tired people do,
They've gone to lay their sleepy heads
Deep deep in warm and happy beds.
The sun has shut his golden eye
And gone to sleep beneath the sky,
The birds and butterflies and bees
Have all crept into flowers and trees,
And all lie quiet, still as mice,
Till morning comes—like father's voice.

So Geoffrey, Owen, Phyllis, you

Must sleep away till morning too.
Close little eyes, down little heads,
And sleep—sleep—sleep in happy beds.

## ROBERT FROST
(1874–1963)

### STOPPING BY THE WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village, though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

## ROBERT SERVICE
(1874–1958)

### GOOD-BYE, LITTLE CABIN

O dear little cabin, I've loved you so long,
  And now I must bid you good-bye!
I've filled you with laughter, I've thrilled you with song,
  And sometimes I've wished I could cry.
Your walls they have witnessed a weariful fight,
  And rung to a won Waterloo:
But oh, in my triumph I'm dreary tonight—
  Good-bye, little cabin, to you!

Your roof is bewhiskered, your floor is aslant,
  Your walls seem to sag and to swing;
I'm trying to find just your faults, but I can't—
  You poor, tired, heart-broken old thing!
I've seen when you've been the best friend that I had,
  Your light like a gem on the snow;
You're sort of a part of me—Gee! but I'm sad;
  I hate, little cabin, to go.

Below your cracked window red raspberries climb;

A hornet's nest hangs from a beam;
Your rafters are scribbled with adage and rhyme,
And dimmed with tobacco and dream.
"Each day has its laugh," and "Don't worry, just work."
Such mottoes reproachfully shine.
Old calendars dangle—what memories lurk
About you, dear cabin of mine!

I hear the world-call and the clang of the fight;
I hear the hoarse cry of my kind;
Yet well do I know, as I quit you tonight,
It's Youth that I'm leaving behind.
And often I'll think of you, empty and black,
Moose antlers nailed over your door:
Oh, if I should perish my ghost will come back
To dwell in you, cabin, once more!

How cold, still and lonely, how weary you seem!
A last wistful look and I'll go.
Oh, will you remember the lad with his dream!
The lad that you comforted so.
The shadows enfold you, it's drawing to night;
The evening star needles the sky;
And huh! but it's stinging and stabbing my sight—
God bless you, old cabin, good-bye!

## JUST THINK!

Just think! some night the stars will gleam
Upon a cold, gray stone,
And trace a name with silver beam,
And lo! 'twill be your own.

That night is speeding on to greet
Your epitaphic rhyme.
Your life is but a little beat
Within the heart of Time.

A little gain, a little pain,
A laugh, lest you may moan;
A little blame, a little fame,
A star-gleam on a stone.

## ALEISTER CROWLEY
(1875–1947)

### NORAH

Norah, my wee shy child of wonderment,
  You are sweeter than a swallow-song at dusk!
  You are braver than a lark that soars and trills
 His lofty laughter of love to a hundred hills!
  You lie like a sweet nut within the husk
Of my big arms; and uttermost content
I have of you, my tiny fairy, eh?
Do you live in a flower, I wonder, and sleep and pray
To the good God to send you dew at dawn
 And rain in rains soft season, and sun betimes,
   And all the gladness of the afterglow
     When you come shyly out of the folded bud,
     Unsheath your dainty soul, bathe it in blood
   Of my heart? Do you love me? Do you know
 How I love you? Do you love these twittering rimes
I string you? Is your tiny life withdrawn
Into its cup for modesty when I sing
  So softly to you and hold you in my hands,
You wild, wee wonder of wisdom? Now I bring

My lips to your body and touch you reverently,
Knowing as I know what Gabriel understands
When he spreads his wings above for canopy
When you would sleep, you frail angelic thing
Like a tiny snowdrop in its own life curled
But oh! the biggest heart in all the world!

## MARY GLADYS WEBB
(1881–1927)

### TO MOTHER
(Christmas, 1920)

Within the doorway of your room tonight
I stood, and saw your little treasures all
Set out beneath the golden candlelight,
While silver chimes haunted the evenfall.
Here was the robin, very round and bright,
Painted by one of us with fingers small,
And childish presents, bought with grave delight,
For many an ancient Christmas festival.
And while I looked, dear mother, I thought of those
Great dreams that men have dreamed—music like flame,
The lovely works of many a deathless name,
Poetry blooming like a fragrant rose;
And knew God kept them in His house above,
As you our gifts, from the greatness of His love.

## AUTUMN

When Autumn winds are on the hill
And darkly rides the wasting moon,
I creep within your arms, and still
Am safe in the golden heart of June.

## THE BIRDS WILL SING

The birds will sing when I am gone
To stranger folk with stranger ways.
Without a break they'll whistle on
In close and flowery orchard deeps,
Where once I loved them, nights and days,
And never reck* of one that weeps.

The bud that slept within the bark
When I was there, will break her bars—
A small green flame from out the dark—
And round into a world, and spread
Beneath the silver dews and stars,
Nor miss my bent, attentive head.

* To take heed, to care for, to regard.

## JOYCE KILMER
(1886–1918)

### THE HOUSE WITH NOBODY IN IT

Whenever I walk to Suffern* along the
Erie track
I go by a poor old farmhouse with its shingles
broken and black.
I suppose I've passed it a hundred times, but I
always stop for a minute
And look at the house, the tragic house, the
house with nobody in it.

I never have seen a haunted house, but I hear
there are such things;
That they hold the talk of spirits, their mirth
and sorrowings.
I know this house isn't haunted, and I wish it
were, I do;
For it wouldn't be so lonely if it had a ghost or
two.

This house on the road to Suffern needs a dozen

panes of glass,
And somebody ought to weed the walk and take
a scythe to the grass.
It needs new paint and shingles, and the vines
should be trimmed and tied;
But what it needs the most of all is some people
living inside.

If I had a lot of money and all my debts were
paid
I'd put a gang of men to work with brush and
saw and spade.
I'd buy that place and fix it up the way it used
to be
And I'd find some people who wanted a home and
give it to them free.

Now, a new house standing empty, with staring
window and door.
Looks idle, perhaps, and foolish, like a hat on
its block in the store.
But there's nothing mournful about it; it can
not be sad and lone
For the lack of something within it that it has
never known.

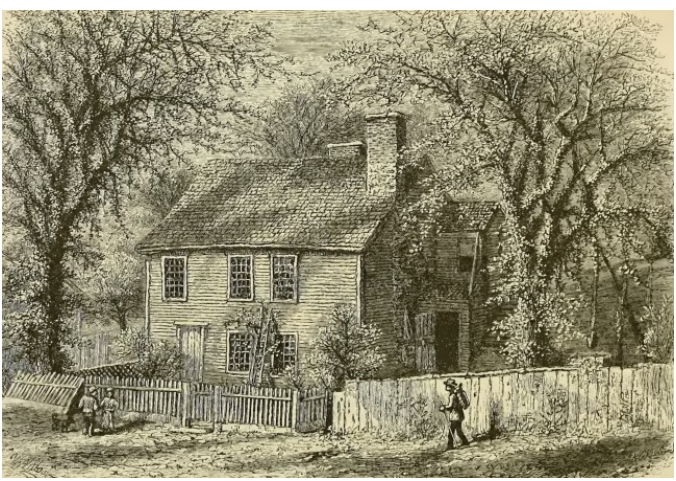
But a house that has done what a house should
do, a house that has sheltered life,
That has put its loving wooden arms around a
man and his wife,

A house that has echoed a baby's laugh and held
up his stumbling feet,
Is the saddest sight, when it's left alone, that ever
your eyes could meet.

So whenever I go to Suffern along the
Erie track
I never go by the empty house without stopping
and looking back.

Yet it hurts me to look at the crumbling roof
and the shutters fallen apart,
For I can't help thinking the poor old house is
a house with a broken heart.

* A village in Rockland County, SE New York State, 28 miles NNW of New York City.



## BENJECHT
(1894–1964)

### MASTER AND MAN

The captain stood where a captain should,
For the law of the sea is grim,
The owner romped ere his ship was swamped
And no law bothered him.

The captain stood where the captain should,
When a captain's boat goes down,
But the owner led when the women fled,
For an owner must not drown.

The captain sank as a man of rank,
While his owner turned away,
The captain's grave was his bridge, and brave
He earned his seaman's pay.

To hold your place in the ghastly face
Of death on the sea of night

Is a seaman's job, but to flee with the mob
Is an owner's noble right.*

* The captain is Edward J. Smith, of RMS *Titanic*, who went down with his ship on April 12, 1912. One of Smith's last orders was "Be British, my men!" The "owner" is Joseph Bruce Ismay, managing director of the White Star Line, which owned *Titanic*. The night Titanic went down, Ismay climbed into a lifeboat, the places in which were reserved for women and children. Ismay died in 1937.

## ROBERT DESNOS
(1900–1945)

### FAIRY TALE

Many times upon a time
There was a man who loved a woman.
Many times upon a time
There was a woman who loved a man.
Many times upon a time
There was a man and there was a woman
Who did not love the ones who loved them.

Once upon a time
Perhaps only once
A man and a woman who loved each other.

## LONG LONG AGO

Long long ago I went through the castle of leaves
Yellowing slowly in the moss
And far away barnacles clung desperately to rocks in the seal-hunting
Your memory better still your tender presence was there too
Transparent and mine
Nothing had changes but everything had aged at the same rate as my temples and
my eyes
Don't you just love that platitude? Let me go it's so rare for me this ironic satisfaction
Everything had aged except your presence
Long long ago I went through the surf on a lonely day
The waves were unreal even then
The hulk of the shipwreck you knew about—remember that night of storms and kisses?—was it a ship or a delicate woman's hat rolled by the wind in the spring rain?—was there too
After that its happiness and dancing in the hawthorns!
The apéritifs had changed the names and colors
Of the rainbows framing the mirrors.

Long long ago you loved me.

## ROBERT E. HOWARD
(1906–1936)

### LINES WRITTEN IN THE REALIZATION THAT I MUST DIE

The Black Door gapes and the Black Wall rises;
  Twilight gasps in the grip of Night.
Paper and dust are the gems man prizes—
  Torches toss in my waning sight.

Drums of glory are lost in the ages,
  Bare feet fail on a broken trail—
Let my name fade from the printed pages;
  Dreams and visions are growing pale.

Twilight gathers and none can save me.
  Well and well, for I would not stay;
Let me speak through the stone you grave me:
  He never could say what he wished to say.

Why should I shrink from the sign of leaving?
  My brain is wrapped in a darkened cloud;
Now in the Night are the Sisters weaving
  For me a shroud.

Towers shake and the stars reel under,
  Skulls are heaped in the Devil's fane;*
My feet are wrapped in a rolling thunder,
  Jets of agony lance my brain.

What of the world that I leave forever?
  Phantom forms in a fading sight—
Carry me out on the ebon river
  Into the Night.

* Fane is an archaic or poetic word for 'temple.'

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